

Publications

Q&A: Childhood Holiday Memories

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You may notice that in addition to providing a new article in this edition of *Development Incentives Quarterly*, we are “re-gifting” two recent client alerts that we believe are particularly important. In that spirit, instead of including one of our traditional Q & A articles, certain members of our national economic development incentives team are sharing some of their favorite childhood holiday memories.

Sean Byrne: Christmas was the one holiday we always spent at home so we could be there for Santa’s arrival (deliveries). We often spent Thanksgiving apart playing tennis tournaments, but Christmas provided down-time and an opportunity to recharge at home. My Mom baked so many Christmas cookies, and my grandparents would come visit and we would play rummy or other card games into the evenings over the holiday break.

Marcus Hughes: Christmas morning always began early for my sister Morgan, my brother Marcel, and me. Before dawn, we would magically awaken speedier than we did on any other day of the year, dress in our favorite Charlie Brown or Grinch pajamas, and sprint in unison toward the eight-foot, eclectically ornamented Christmas tree that we had taken turns decorating the previous night. Unfortunately for our parents, our early awakening did not mean we went to sleep any sooner.

Chris Knezevic: There are a lot of things I could mention, but I will go with Christmas Eve. After attending the Christmas Eve mass at St. Johns in downtown Cleveland, my family would go to my Grandma and Grandpa’s house for a night of incredible food and lots of presents. The menu would include, among other tasty items, kielbasa, my Grandma’s famous chicken drummettes (my brother has worked years trying to recreate the recipe), homemade chocolates, and champagne. Lots of champagne! It may sound like a random collection of food, but trust me, it was the best. As kids, we would come home with garbage bags filled with toys. It was the perfect way to start our Christmas every year.

Jacinto Nunez: Growing up in South Florida in a Cuban-American family, no holiday was more festive than Christmas Eve, or *Nochebuena*. Whether at my parents' or my aunt's house, the extended family would gather and celebrate Nochebuena with Cuban food, music, and dance. The centerpiece of the festivities was roasting a whole suckling pig under indirect heat in a homemade outdoor oven known as a "caja china". I loved staring at the ever-shifting light from embers of the coals blanketing the main course until it was ready to be removed from the oven. Soon delicious pork cracklings would soon be served with tender meat, savory black beans and rice, traditional Afro-Caribbean vegetables, and delicious once-a-year desserts. Even in the cold confines of Ohio where I now live, I observe Nochebuena traditions (though the pork is usually roasted in a conventional oven indoors).

Scott Ziance: Every Christmas Eve, we would drive from my hometown of Altoona, PA "up the mountain" to Grandma and Grandpap Dietrick's house in Spangler, PA to have dinner, celebrate, and open gifts in their small home with my siblings, aunts and uncles, and numerous cousins. Somehow, despite the chaos and wall-to-wall people, Grandpap was always able to fall asleep in his favorite chair after dinner. On the way home, we were usually able to catch a glimpse of Rudolph helping Santa make some early deliveries.